

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TEHRAN 03467 01 OF 02 201218Z

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /076 W

-----201236Z 024777 /15

R 201054Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2174

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

USINT BAGHDAD

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEHRAN 3467

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IR, IZ, KU, XF

SUBJ: INTERVIEWS WITH IRAQI LEADERS

REF: KUWAIT 2061

1. TEHRAN 3317, REPORTING SADDAM HUSSEIN RECENT INTERVIEW WITH IRANIAN JOURNALIST, BEING REPEATED ADDRESSEE POSTS FOR INFORMATION.

2. HUSSEIN INTERVIEW AS REPORTED IN TEHRAN JOURNAL ARTICLE BY STAFF REPORTER ALI REZA JAHAN-SHAHI DID NOT RPT NOT INCLUDE STATEMENT CONTAINED PARA 3 REFTEL. LANGUAGE REPORTED REFTEL PARA 1 APPEARS MUCH STRONGER THAN THAT CARRIED UNDER JAHAN-SHAHI'S BYLINE. PARAGRAPH RE US NAVY PRESENCE IN GULF, AS WRITTEN BY JAHAN-SHAHI, FOLLOWS:

"EXPLAINING THIS STAND, HUSSEIN FURTHER SAID THAT, FOR EXAMPLE, CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 TEHRAN 03467 01 OF 02 201218Z

SOME OF THE REGIONAL COUNTRIES DID NOT REGARD VISITS BY AMERICAN NAVAL UNITS AS ANYTHING DANGEROUS, 'BUT IN IRAQ WE DO NOT FEEL EASY ABOUT THESE VISITS TO THE REGION. THE SAME IS TRUE ABOUT THE VISITS TO IRAQ BY SOVIET NAVAL UNITS."

3. INTERVIEW ABOVE WAS BILLED AS AN "EXCLUSIVE" FOR THE IRANIAN REPORTED. IT APPEARS, HOWEVER, THAT ANOTHER IRANIAN

REPORTER, MAHMOUD TEHERI OF RASTAKHIZ, WAS RECENTLY RECEIVED BY HUSSEIN. QUOTES CITED REFTEL DO NOT APPEAR WORD FOR WORD IN APRIL 16 RASTAKHIZ. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION ON FOREIGN INFLUENCE IN PERSIAN GULF, OUR INFORMAL TRANSLATION OF HUSSEIN'S LONG ANSWER IN RASTAKHIZ FOLLOWS:

"EVEN NOW FOREIGNERS ARE PRESENT IN THE REGION AND EVEN INTERVENE IN ITS AFFAIRS, BUT VIEWPOINTS ARE DIFFERENT AS TO WHO IS THE INTERVENING PARTY AND TO WHAT EXTENT THE INTERVENTION. FOR INSTANCE ANY CLOSURE OF THE PERSIAN GULF AND OF THE NAVIGATIONAL LINES THEREIN, WHETHER DISTURBANCE COLLECTIVELY OR BY INDIVIDUAL GOVERNMENTS, IS CONSIDERED BY IRAQ TO BE A THREAT AGAINST IT, JUST AS IT IS A THREAT TO IRAN. THE VISITS OF THE AMERICAN NAVY TO SOME PERSIAN GULF COUNTRIES ARE A THREAT TO US FROM THE IRAQI POINT OF VIEW, BUT THEY MAY EVEN BE WELCOME FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF OTHER COUNTRIES, AND THE VISITS OF THE SOVIET NAVY TO IRAQ ARE CONSIDERED BY SOME COUNTRIES AS A THREAT AGAINST THEM WHILE THEY ARE NOT REGARDED BY IRAQ TO BE A THREAT. THE INTERNAL COUPS OF SOME OF THE PERSIAN GULF STATES MAY BE CONSIDERED A THREAT BY SOME OTHER OF THE REGION'S COUNTRIES, BUT OTHER COUNTRIES MAY REGARD THEM AS AN ORDINARY EVENT. IRAQ FOR ONE DOES NOT WISH OTHER COUNTRIES TO COME TO ITS RESCUE EVEN IF AN INTERNAL REVOLUTION SHOULD TAKE PLACE HERE, BUT SOME OTHER REGIMES OF THE REGION MAY WISH TO CONSOLIDATE FOREIGN TIES TO SUCH A EXTENT THAT THEY MAY ASK FOR MILITARY AID FROM THE NEIGHBORING COUNTRY AS SOON AS A BULLET IS FIRED WITHIN THEIR TERRITORY. THIS IS RELATED TO THE NATURE OF THE MUTUAL TIES AND INTERESTS. FOR EXAMPLE, EXISTENCE OF AN ARMED PARTY TRYING TO THREATEN THE NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY OF IRAQ OR THAT OF KUWAIT WILL BE CONSIDERED BY IRAQ AS A COMMON THREAT REQUIRING COORDINATION, EVEN MILITARILY AND POLITICALLY, BETWEEN US AND KUWAIT. THE SAME
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TEHRAN 03467 01 OF 02 201218Z

IS ALSO TRUE OF IRAQ AND IRAN."

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PAGE 01 TEHRAN 03467 02 OF 02 201229Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TEHRAN 3467

4. EMBASSY HAS BEEN ADVISED BY REUTER'S TEHRAN REP THAT HE FILED A SHORT, 250 WORD, STORY ON RASTAKHIZ ARTICLE WHICH DID NOT RPT NOT INCLUDE QUOTES CITED REFTEL. HE CANNOT EXPLAIN REUTERS ATTRIBUTION ON STORY IN KUWAIT PAPER.

5. A SECOND "EXCLUSIVE" INTERVIEW WITH AN IRAQI LEADER WAS CARRIED TEHRAN JOURNAL APRIL 19 EDITION. FOREIGN MINISTER HAMMADI RECEIVED JAHAN-SHAHI IN BAGHDAD "LAST WEEK". INTERVIEW, AS REPORTED IN TEHRAN, FOCUSED ON IMPORTANCE TO IRAQ OF BILATERAL, AS OPPOSED TO MULTILATERAL, RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES; US POLICY IN MIDDLE EAST; AND DEVELOPMENTS IN RED SEA REGION.

6. REPEATING THEME STRESSED BY HUSSEIN IN EARLIER INTERVIEW, HAMMADI SAID BILATERAL AGREEMENTS OFFER BETTER SECURITY WITHIN REGION. WITH REGARD TO A FUTURE MEETING OF PERSIAN GULF FOREIGN MINISTERS, HE SAID, "MY COUNTRY WILL STUDY ANY
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 TEHRAN 03467 02 OF 02 201229Z

PROPOSAL WITH AN OPEN MIND, BUT YOU SEE I STILL DO FEEL THAT IF THE CONFERENCE WERE TO BE CONVENED IN HASTE, IT COULD HARDLY BE VERY CONSEQUENTIAL." HE SPECIFICALLY STATED THAT IRAQ WOULD NOT JOIN RCD BUT WOULD PURSUE ITS ECONOMIC INTERESTS THROUGH BILATERAL RELATIONS. COMMENTING ON BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH IRAN, HAMMADI SAID "NO DIFFICULTIES" EXISTED AND THAT "THERE IS GREAT SCOPE FOR VERY CLOSE RELATIONS BETWEEN US...THE LEADERSHIP OF THE TWO COUNTRIES HAS THE POLITICAL WILL THAT IS NECESSARY IN STRENGTHENING BILATERAL TIES."

7. IN HAMMADI'S VIEW US POLICY IN MIDDLE EAST HAS NOT CHANGED DESPITE PRESIDENT CARTER'S STATEMENT ON THE NEED FOR A PALESTINIAN HOMELAND. "IF ONE STUDIES THE RECENT STATEMENT AND DEVELOPMENTS, IT BECOMES OBVIOUS THAT THE AMERICAN STANCE IN THE REGION IS BASED ON FULL SUPPORT TO ISRAEL AND AS LONG AS THIS UNCONDITIONAL SUPPORT CONSTITUTES THE BASIS

OF WASHINGTON'S MIDEAST OUTLOOK, ONE CANNOT HARBOR ANY REAL HOPE FOR A REAL SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM", HAMMADI STATED. REINFORCING THIS INFLEXIBLE POSITION, HE ADDED THAT THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT "WAS NOT NECESSARY" SINCE "THE WORLD IS WELL AWARE THAT IT WAS THE COLONIAL INTERESTS THAT CONSPIRED AT THE EJECTION OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE FROM THEIR HOMELAND. AS LONG AS THE NATION OF PALESTINE IS NOT ABLE TO REGAIN ITS HOMELAND, ANY HOPE OF A LEASTING SOLUTION TO THE MIDEAST PROBLEM IS IMMATURE." (SIC).

8. ON THE QUESTION OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THE RED SEA REGION, HAMMADI STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF THE AREA TO ARAB COUNTRIES "BECAUSE OF THE COLLABORATION IN THAT REGION BETWEEN ISRAEL AND ETHIOPIA". WITHOUT REVEALING IRAQ'S SPECIFIC INTENTIONS IN THE AREA, HE ADDED, "WE DO NOT KNOW IF THIS KIND OF COLLABORATION IS STILL GOING ON, BUT WE FEEL THAT STEPS HAVE TO BE TAKEN TO PRESERVE ARAB INTERESTS IN THE RED SEA".
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